

COURSE SYLLABUS

Survey of Church History

Course Lecturer: Garth M. Rosell, PhD

Course Description

Welcome to *Survey of Church History*, an online graduate-level course designed to expand your understanding of the first 2,000 years of the history of the Christian church.

Church history is the heart of the story of God's kingdom work on earth. This course explores the development of the Christian church from Pentecost through the 21st century. It covers key people and events that God used throughout history to bolster His church, and it also explores the negative influences that infected her. The goal of the course is to use lessons from church history to advance the kingdom of God in life and ministry.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, you should be able to do the following:

- Discuss the connection between the Jewish faith and the Christian faith particularly in terms of the early development of the church and its theology.
- Understand the development of leadership structures within the organized church of the Western world, beginning with New Testament teachings and leading to the present time.
- Assess the impact of persecution on the church from early days to the present day.
- Discuss the effect on the church and its relationship with government, citing specific historical examples world wide from Christ to the present day.
- Identify the major contributions made by Augustine to the church's theology of salvation, redemption, and grace.
- Develop a personal philosophy of war based on study of the Crusades and teachings of historical theologians.
- Practice a biblical theology of knowing God based upon the study of the historical approaches of both mystics and scholars. Understand the Reformers including their relationship to the Catholic Church, their purpose, their theology, and the results of their actions.
- Evaluate the impact of denominationalism on the unity of the church particularly in the North American church.
- Develop a personal theology of missions based in part on the positive and negative aspects of the mission movements of the past two centuries.

- Discuss aspects of church histories that are specific to areas of the world outside of North America.
- Examine and evaluate western Christian trends of the 20th century including Fundamentalism, Modernism, Evangelicalism, and Catholicism.
- Discuss the growth of the Christian church in the world today and identify challenges facing ministry in the new millennium.

Course Lecturer



Garth M. Rosell, PhD

Education:

- Oxford and Cambridge, sabbatical studies
- Fuller Seminary and the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, graduate studies
- University of Minnesota, PhD
- Princeton Theological Seminary, MDiv and ThM
- Wheaton College, BA

Teaching Career:

- Professor of Church History and Director Emeritus, Ockenga Institute at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
- Academic Dean, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (9 years)—helped secure regional accreditation for the Seminary
- Three of his courses voted “Course of the Year”
- Named “Professor Who Has Had the Greatest Impact on Our Lives” multiple times
- Church History teacher, Bethel Theological Seminary (8 years)
- Lecturer and teacher at various college campuses and seminaries across the United States
- One of the most sought after evangelical scholars

Other Career Highlights:

- Widely regarded as one of the finest church historians in Christianity
- Member of numerous professional societies and a number of boards and committees
- Founding member, *In Trust* magazine Editorial Council
- Ordained in the Presbyterian Church
- Minister in local congregations and volunteer on denominational committees while pastoring various churches throughout the years
- Member of multiple community and philanthropic boards in the Boston area
- Chair of numerous accreditation teams for the Association of Theological Seminaries (ATS)
- Director of Counseling and Follow-Up, Billy Graham Pavilion at the New York World’s Fair

Publications:

- Publications include *Commending the Faith: The Preaching of D. L. Moody*, *The Evangelical Landscape*, *American Christianity*, and *The Surprising Work of God: Harold John Ockenga, Billy Graham, and the Rebirth of Evangelicalism*
- Recipient of a *Christianity Today* book award for his *Memoirs of Charles G. Finney*

Recommended Reading

Though not required, you may choose to read the textbooks shown below to supplement your learning.

Shelley, Bruce. *Church History in Plain Language*. 4th edition. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2013.

Noll, Mark. *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*. 3rd edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012.

Textbooks can be ordered through your local bookstore, various online bookstores, or through your preferred eReader when available.

Course Methods

The lecture content for each lesson is provided in two easy-to-use formats: audio and PDF text (if available). Students can choose the medium (or combination of media) that most closely aligns with their individual learning styles.

Course Requirements

To earn a Certificate of Completion, you must complete the course requirements. Course requirements include:

1. Viewing the following for each lesson:
 - **Lesson Overview:** A brief outline of what the lecturer will cover in the lesson.
 - **Lesson Objectives:** Objectives describe the learning outcomes you should achieve by the end of the lesson.
 - **Lectures:** 45 minute lessons that can be viewed as many times as needed.
2. Earning a 70% or higher score on each lesson Quiz and the Final Exam.
Quizzes and the Final Exam will cover the material presented in the lectures.